

REMARKS

In the Office Action, Claims 11, 12, 15 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 7,369,875 (Kuba), and Claims 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Kuba and U.S. Publication No. 2002/0149677 (Wright). These rejections are traversed, for at least the reasons discussed below.

The present invention generally concerns selective access to a removable storage medium. A storage apparatus includes a first interface unit that has a first port for connection to a first external apparatus, and a second interface unit that has a second port for connection to a second external apparatus. The storage apparatus further includes a third interface unit for connection to a removable storage medium.

According to one aspect of the invention, if the first interface unit detects that the first external apparatus is connected to the first port, it is determined whether the first external apparatus is capable of accessing the removable storage medium. If the second interface unit detects that the second external apparatus is connected to the second port, it is determined whether the second external apparatus is capable of accessing the removable storage medium.

By virtue of this arrangement, it is ordinarily possible to ensure that a connected external apparatus can access a removable storage medium before granting the external apparatus exclusive access to the removable storage medium.

Referring specifically to claim language, independent Claim 11 is directed to a storage apparatus. The apparatus includes a first interface unit for connection to a first external apparatus, the first interface unit having a first port to which the first external apparatus is connectable and disconnectable and through which the first interface unit

connects to the first external apparatus. The apparatus also includes a second interface unit for connection to a second external apparatus, the second interface unit having a second port to which the second external apparatus is connectable and disconnectable and through which the second interface unit connects to the second external apparatus. The apparatus further includes a third interface unit for connection to a removable storage medium. In addition, the apparatus includes a control unit that controls the first port and the second port. If the first interface unit detects that the first external apparatus is connected to the first port, the control unit determines whether the first external apparatus is capable of accessing the removable storage medium connected to the third interface unit. If the second interface unit detects that the second external apparatus is connected to the second port, the control unit determines whether the second external apparatus is capable of accessing the removable storage medium connected to the third interface unit. The control unit sets the second port in a disabled state responsive to a determination that the first external apparatus connected to the first port is capable of accessing the removable storage medium connected to the third interface unit, and the control unit sets the first port in the disabled state responsive to a determination that the second external apparatus connected to the second port is capable of accessing the removable storage medium connected to the third interface unit.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or suggest the features of the present invention, and in particular is not seen to disclose or suggest at least the features of determining whether a first external apparatus is capable of accessing a removable storage medium if it is detected that the first external apparatus is connected to an apparatus through a first port, and determining whether a second external apparatus is capable of

accessing the removable storage medium if it is detected that the second external apparatus is connected to the apparatus through a second port.

As understood by Applicant, Kuba is directed to sending photographic image data to a radio telephone line via a communication interface. The image data is converted to a configuration corresponding to the type of the radio telephone line. See Kuba, Abstract.

Pages 3 and 4 of the Office Action assert that Kuba (Figures 2 to 4, Column 5, line 41 to Column 6, line 11, Column 7, lines 38 to 60 and Column 8, lines 1 to 19) discloses determining whether a first external apparatus is capable of accessing a removable storage medium if a first interface unit detects that the first external apparatus is connected to a first port, and determining whether a second external apparatus is capable of accessing a removable storage medium if a second interface unit detects that the second external apparatus is connected to a second port.

However, the cited portions of Kuba simply disclose switching between low and high-speed communication interfaces based on where an external apparatus is connected. The communication interfaces which can detect a type of radio telephone line carrier such as PHS or PDC. See Kuba, Column 5, line 41 to Column 6, line 18 and Column 8, lines 1 to 19. The dialing and line connection process are tailored to the detected carrier type. See Kuba, Column 7, lines 38 to 60.

Thus, Kuba is not seen to disclose or suggest determining whether a external apparatus is capable of accessing a removable storage medium at all, much less determining whether a first external apparatus is capable of accessing a removable storage medium if it is detected that the first external apparatus is connected to an apparatus

through a first port, and determining whether a second external apparatus is capable of accessing the removable storage medium if it is detected that the second external apparatus is connected to the apparatus through a second port.

Wright has been reviewed and is not seen to remedy the above-noted deficiencies of Kuba.

Therefore, independent Claim 11 is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from Claim 11 and are therefore believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

Turning to a formal matter, an Information Disclosure Statement accompanies this paper. Consideration of the cited art is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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FDHS_WS 2590142v1